

What is claimed is:

1. A copper smelting process comprising the steps of:
providing a blister copper-producing means, a plurality of anode furnaces and blister copper launder means for connecting said blister copper-producing means and said anode furnaces;
producing blister copper in said blister copper-producing means;

subsequently causing said blister copper produced in said blister copper-producing means to flow through said blister copper launder means into one of said anode furnaces; and

refining said blister copper into copper of higher quality in said anode furnace.

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2. The process as recited in claim ¹, wherein said refining step includes the steps of:

receiving the blister copper ~~tapping~~ through said blister copper launder means in said anode furnace;

oxidizing the blister copper in said anode furnace by blowing oxidizing gas into said anode furnace;

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subsequently reducing the oxidized copper in said anode furnace into the copper of higher ^{purity} ~~quality~~; and

subsequently discharging said copper of higher quality from said anode furnace; and

wherein said blister copper receiving step and said oxidizing step are carried out at least partly in an overlapping fashion.

3. The process as recited in claim 2, wherein said anode

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furnace includes a furnace body supported rotatably about an axis thereof with said axis being arranged horizontally, said furnace body including a tuyere opening thereinto, and wherein said oxidizing step includes blowing said oxidizing gas into said anode furnace while adjusting a depth of said tuyere from a melt surface in said anode furnace by rotating said furnace body.

4. The process as recited in claim 2, wherein said oxidizing gas is composed of oxygen-enriched air.

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